

VZCZCXRO5776  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS  
DE RUEHIHL #0092/01 1441157  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 241157Z MAY 06  
FM REO HILLAH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0635  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0621  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH 0686

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HILLAH 000092

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

BAGHDAD FOR NCT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/24/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC DA'WA PARTY CHIEF IN BABIL CALLING FOR IRAQI  
FEDERALISM, U.S. COOPERATION, AND COALITION WITHDRAWAL

HILLAH 00000092 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Alfred Fonteneau, Regional Coordinator, REO  
Hillah, Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (U) This is a Babil PRT cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY. During a recent meeting Abu Al-Basri, Islamic Da'wa Party Chief of Babil Province, offered Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) staff insight into the party's opinions on reconstruction, the Provincial Council (PC), other Shi'a Islamist parties and the question of U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Al-Basri expressed candidly that the party sees little direct signs of reconstruction and remains frustrated with the ineffectiveness of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq-dominated (SCIRI) Provincial Council (PC). Despite criticism of the PC and his attempts to distance Da'wa from other Shi'a Islamist groups during the meeting, he underscored that Iraq needs a federal system of government giving Shi'a complete primacy in southern Iraq. Al-Basri's also stated that it is time for the United States to be "honest" with the people of Iraq and called for the expedited withdrawal of Coalition Forces from the country. END SUMMARY.

-----  
ISLAMIC DA'WA VIEWS ON RECONSTRUCTION  
-----

13. (C) Starting off, Al-Basri focused upon Coalition reconstruction efforts in the province, and in Iraq as a whole. The goal of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, he argued, was to remove Saddam, establish a representative government and then quickly depart, but the continued presence of American and Coalition forces contradicts the originally stated mission. He further maintained that U.S. uses the concept of reconstruction as a rationalization for an open-ended presence in Iraq, as there are no indications at all of rebuilding. Citing the inability of the United States to rebuild the country, Al-Basri further stated that it is time for Iraqi people and Iraqi companies to take over the reconstruction efforts, with the backing of U.S. funds.

-----  
ISLAMIC DA'WA VIEWS ON THE BABIL PROVINCIAL COUNCIL  
-----

14. (C) Asked if the SCIRI-dominated PC provides adequate support to Coalition reconstruction efforts, Al-Basri replied that the PC is a weak body, unable to conduct the basic functions of the government, let alone assist with reconstruction efforts. He further added that "talk on the street" suggests the people blame the United States for the lack of reconstruction, as

opposed to the PC. Asked if the people view the recent Iraqi-led, U.S.-supported date palm tree spraying program as successful, Al-Basri laughed and replied that there are more bugs threatening the palm trees in South-Central now than before the initiation of the May campaign. Despite this claim, Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture report that the campaign was highly successful.

¶5. (C) Al-Basri further attacked the PC, stating that the individual members remain unwilling to coordinate their efforts due to petty infighting. Often, he added, the PC makes such rash decisions that the Council of Representatives quickly overturns their hasty legislation. Employing the ongoing controversy of the PC attempt to fire Babil Police Chief General Qais Al-Momouri as an example, he argued that the PC failed to study their position and its eventual implications. Considering that the government of Iraq was about to be sworn in and a new Minister of the Interior appointed, the PC, he contended, should have delayed their decision to fire the General before causing such a scandal.

-----  
ISLAMIC DA'WA AS A DISTINCT POLITICAL PARTY  
-----

¶6. (C) Al-Basri then went on to illustrate his vision of the future of the Islamic Da'wa Party in Babil. The party, he argued, is popular with the people because its platform calls for the universal respect of human rights and the protection of individual freedoms. When asked about the party's prospects, Al-Basri boasted that Da'wa will win the "lion's share" of PC seats, if they decide to run on their own ticket in the upcoming local and provincial elections. He added that the previous appointment of Ja'afari as Prime Minister (PM) certainly increased the visibility of the party on a national level and that such name recognition will be crucial in the province, despite the former PM's failure to win a second term.

¶7. (C) Al-Basri then criticized other Shi'a Islamist

HILLAH 00000092 002.2 OF 002

organizations in South-Central, arguing that only Da'wa should be termed as an actual political party. SCIRI and the Sadrists, he stated, formed after the fall of Saddam, whereas the Da'wa party was created in the late 1950s to oppose the old regime. Moqtada Al-Sadr, he argued, has not created a political party in the true sense of the term, but on the contrary, exploited his father's cult of personality to gain followers. SCIRI, he stated, has not publicized their objectives and does not possess an enunciated political program. However, there are commonalities between all Shi'a organizations, he stated, and the implementation of federalism in Iraq is certainly one of them.

-----  
ISLAMIC DA'WA VIEWS ON THE U.S. IN IRAQ  
-----

¶8. (C) The Islamic Da'wa Party Chief concluded that the United States needs to be truthful with the Iraqi people and carry out the promises given in 2003, including rebuilding the country and departing. If the Americans are truthful, he stated, then the Iraqi people will cooperate with their U.S. counterparts in true friendship. If the Americans are untruthful, he warned, then the "Iraqi people will have another talk with them." PRT staff asked if he could provide examples of when the United States has lied to the people of Iraq. Unwilling to provide an example, Al-Basri politely dodged the question by stating that he felt that it was time for Coalition Forces to depart.

¶9. (C) COMMENT. The meeting on a whole was friendly, but the Islamic Da'wa Party Chief of Babil was obviously frustrated with both the lack of reconstruction in the province and the presence of Coalition forces in Iraq. While he may have overestimated the support his party has in the province, the intensifying efforts of all the Shi'a Islamist parties to consolidate power in South-Central goes forward unfettered. END COMMENT.  
MEURS